

Message Text

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NODIS
WHITE HOUSE FOR BRZEZINSKI

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SUBJECT: TEXT OF SOVIET NON-PAPER ON THE HORN OF AFRICA

1. THE FOLLOWING IS THE COMPLETE TEXT OF A NON-PAPER GIVEN
TO MARSHALL SHULMAN BY SOVIET MINISTER COUNSELOR BESSMER-
TNYKH ON MARCH 18, 1978.

2. BEGIN TEXT: MOSCOW HAS CAREFULLY STUDIED THE CONSIDERA-
TIONS EXPRESSED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE IN THE CONVERSA-
TION WITH THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR REGARDING THE SOMALI-
ETHIOPIAN CONFLICT. IN ADDITION TO WHAT WE HAVE EARLIER
STATED ON THIS MATTER WE WOULD LIKE TO BRING TO THE
ATTENTION OF THE US LEADERSHIP THE FOLLOWING.

FIRST OF ALL TO GIVE A CORRECT ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION

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IT IS NECESSARY TO HAVE IN MIND THAT THE DECISION OF THE
SOMALI LEADERSHIP TO WITHDRAW ITS TROOPS FROM THE OCCUPIED
PART OF THE TERRITORY OF ETHIOPIA WAS A FORCED STEP
RESULTED FROM THE SUCCESSFUL OPERATIONS OF THE ETHIOPIAN
ARMY AIMED AT THE LIQUIDATION OF THE AGGRESSION AND BY NO
MEANS WAS IT A MANIFESTATION OF GOOD WILL. THIS FACT IS
OF BASIC IMPORTANCE THE MORE SO THAT HAVING ANNOUNCED THE

SAID INTENTION THE SOMALI LEADERS CONTINUE TO SPEAK OF THEIR TERRITORIAL CLAIMS TOWARDS ETHIOPIA AND SOME OTHER NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES.

IT IS QUITE OBVIOUS THAT SUCH A POSITION DOES NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE ELIMINATION OF THE CONFLICT AND SHOWS ONCE MORE WHAT REALLY CAUSED IT. IT ALSO CLEARLY INDICATES THAT THE ENTIRE RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONTINUING BLOODSHED RESTS WITH THE SOMALI SIDE.

IN THIS CONNECTION IT IS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND THE REASONS FOR RAISING THE QUESTION OF PLACING FOREIGN OBSERVERS OF SOME KIND IN THE ETHIOPIAN TERRITORY. THE LEADERSHIP OF ETHIOPIA WAS UTTERLY DEFINITE IN GIVING ITS NEGATIVE ANSWER TO IT.

INTRODUCTION OF FOREIGN OBSERVERS INTO THE ETHIOPIAN TERRITORY, WHATEVER THE GUIDING MOTIVES BEHIND IT, WOULD ACTUALLY REPRESENT AN ATTEMPT TO QUESTION THE SOVEREIGN RIGHTS OF ETHIOPIA TO A PART OF ITS TERRITORY AND WOULD IN FACT SUPPORT THE EXPANSIONIST CLAIMS OF SOMALIA.

ETHIOPIA HAS EXPLICITLY STATED AND DOES IT NOW THAT IT HAS NO AGGRESSIVE INTENTIONS TOWARDS SOMALIA AND THAT ITS AIM IS TO ENSURE ITS TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND SECURITY. THE SECRET

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ETHIOPIAN LEADERSHIP HAS CLEARLY FORMULATED ITS POSITION OF PRINCIPLE POSTULATING FOR THE COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL FROM THE OGADEN WITHOUT ANY CONDITIONS OF ALL THE SOMALI REGULAR FORCES AND OTHER ARMED UNITS OPERATING TOGETHER WITH THEM, RENUNCIATION BY SOMALIA OF TERRITORIAL CLAIMS AND OF ATTEMPTS TO INTERFERE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF ETHIOPIA AND OTHER NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. THIS IS A WELL-FOUNDED AND LEGITIMATE POSITION.

MOSCOW WOULD LIKE TO HOPE THAT THE US IS ALSO OF THE SAME OPINION. IN ANY CASE, WE NOTICED THE RECENT PUBLIC STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT CARTER TO THE EFFECT THAT FIRM COMMITMENTS ARE NECESSARY ON THE PART OF SOMALIA NOT TO DISHONOR THE INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES OF EITHER ETHIOPIA OR KENYA. WE CONSIDER IT A POSITIVE STEP TOWARDS ENSURING PROPER CONDITIONS FOR THE LIQUIDATION OF THE CONFLICT.

ONE CAN ONLY REGRET THAT THE US COMES BACK TIME AND AGAIN TO THE QUESTION OF THE AID TO ETHIOPIA ON THE PART OF THE USSR AND CUBA AND RAISES THIS QUESTION IN A MANNER WHICH DOES NOT PROMOTE EITHER SETTLEMENT OF THE CONFLICT OR THE GOALS OF POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR RELATIONS. IT SHOULD

BE FIRST OF ALL REMINDED THAT THIS IS A MATTER INVOLVING THE RELATIONS OF THE USSR AND CUBA WITH ETHIOPIA WHICH IN EXERCISING ITS SOVEREIGN RIGHT, REQUESTED THE FRIENDLY

STATES TO PROVIDE HELP IN REPELLING THE AGGRESSION AND SAFEGUARDING ITS SECURITY. IT IS PRECISELY AND ONLY THOSE AIMS, I.E. REPELLING THE AGGRESSION AND SAFEGUARDING THE SECURITY OF ETHIOPIA, THAT DETERMINE THE AID RENDERED TO ETHIOPIA AND ITS SCOPE. IT IS BY NO MEANS DIRECTED AGAINST INDEPENDENCE, TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND SOVEREIGNTY OF SOMALIA OR ANY OTHER COUNTRY.

WE WANT TO CLEARLY SAY THIS ONCE MORE AS WELL AS TO STATE THAT THE USSR DOES NOT SEEK ANY ADVANTAGES FOR ITSELF.

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THEREFORE THE US SHOULD NOT AND CANNOT HAVE ANY REASONS FOR BEING CONCERNED ABOUT OUR AID TO ETHIOPIA.

THE SOVIET UNION WAS AND CONTINUES TO BE STRONGLY IN FAVOR OF AN EARLIEST PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE CONFLICT IN THE HORN OF AFRICA. WE PROCEED FROM THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE US IS ALSO INTERESTED IN IT AND WE BELIEVE THAT IF THESE EVENTS CONTINUE TO AFFECT NEGATIVELY OUR RELATIONS THEN IT WOULD DO NO GOOD EITHER FOR THE US OR FOR THE USSR.

IN CONNECTION WITH THE PREVIOUS MESSAGE BY THE US SIDE WE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE INTEREST SHOWN ON THE PART OF THE US IN AN EARLY ELIMINATION OF NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF THE CONFLICT IN THE HORN OF AFRICA FOR SOVIET-US RELATIONS WILL BE TRANSLATED INTO PRACTICAL CONSTRUCTIVE DEEDS.

WE CONSIDER IT NECESSARY TO DRAW ATTENTION OF THE US LEADERSHIP TO THE FACT THAT THIS INTEREST IS BY NO MEANS CORROBORATED BY PRESS REPORTS DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTED TO OFFICIAL SOURCES IN WHICH THE POSITION OF THE USSR REGARDING THE CURRENT SITUATION AROUND THE SOMALI-ETHIOPIAN CONFLICT IS DISTORTED AND THE MATTER IS UNDULY PRESENTED IN SUCH A WAY AS IF THE SOVIET UNION GAVE CONSENT TO THE PLACEMENT OF FOREIGN OBSERVERS IN THE OGADEN, TO THE REDUCTION OF CUBAN PRESENCE IN ETHIOPIA, ETC. SUCH MISREPRESENTATION OF THE POSITION OF THE SOVIET UNION DOES IN NO WAY CONTRIBUTE TO THE CAUSE OF SETTLEMENT AND CAN ONLY REDUCE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR EXCHANGE OF OPINIONS WITH THE US SIDE. END TEXT. VANCE

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